



C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: 1/23/2025
TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager
FROM: Rachel Macintyre, Activation Coordinator
DEPT: Economic Development, City Manager's Office
SUBJECT: Activation Updates for 2025

Overview:

The City of Reno's 2025 Activation Pilot Programs are designed to enhance downtown engagement, foster community pride, and stimulate local business and tourism through a diverse range of events and cultural experiences. These initiatives will activate public spaces, provide free and accessible entertainment for residents, and bring visitors to Reno's core. Below is an update on the major events and activities slated for the 2025 event season.

Goals and Objectives:

1. **Community Engagement:** Each event is designed to foster inclusivity, celebrate diversity, and provide free opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together.
2. **Economic Impact:** These events will drive foot traffic to local businesses, stimulate tourism, and increase sales for downtown shops, restaurants, and services.
3. **Cultural Development:** By highlighting various musical genres, arts, and cultural experiences, these events will contribute to the ongoing cultural development of downtown Reno, positioning the area as a lively and diverse destination for both residents and visitors.
4. **Activation of Public Spaces:** By utilizing key public spaces such as West Street Plaza, Locomotion Plaza, and City Plaza, we will continue to transform downtown into a vibrant, welcoming area that draws people in year-round.

Funding:

These activations are funded through the ARPA budget for the 2025 and 2026 event seasons.

Partnership:

To ensure the success of our activations, we have contracted with eight new event promoters to produce eight unique events and activate our Downtown for a total of 47 days of new programming for our local community.

Event Calendar Overview:

A. Western Lights Festival

- a. Dates: February 20th-23rd
- b. Location: Multiple Plazas Downtown
- c. Details: A 3-day illuminated art festival transforming downtown Reno into an open-air gallery experience. Featuring over 30 art installations and 30+ live musical performances, the festival will showcase cutting-edge art and light installations from local, national, and international artists. The Western Lights Festival is expected to be a major winter tourism draw, further solidifying Reno's reputation as a hub for artistic and cultural expression.

B. Beats and Bites: Food Trucks & Live Music

- a. Dates: Every Wednesday, June-August
- b. Location: West Street Plaza
- c. Details: This weekly event will bring together local food trucks and live music performances. The event will create a lively mid-week gathering spot for both locals and visitors, supporting Reno's food scene while providing entertainment for all ages.

C. Harmony on the River: Community Concerts

- a. Dates: Every Tuesday, June-August
- b. Location: West Street Plaza
- c. Details: A free community concert series featuring diverse musical genres, from jazz to folk and beyond. This event aims to enhance the cultural vibrancy of downtown, offering a weekly opportunity for families and visitors to enjoy live music in a relaxed setting.

D. Dancing on the River: Cumbia & Bachata Socials

- a. Dates: First Saturday of each month, May-August
- b. Location: City Plaza
- c. Details: A monthly dance social highlighting Cumbia and Bachata music, inviting the community to participate in dance lessons and social dancing. This event aims to engage the Latinx community and dance enthusiasts of all backgrounds, creating a vibrant atmosphere and drawing new audiences to the area.

E. House Party Open Air: Music & Art Experience

- a. Dates: Monthly, July-September
- b. Location: Locomotion Plaza
- c. Details: A unique monthly event combining live music, art installations, and interactive experiences. Local musicians and artists will collaborate to create a dynamic open-air venue that fosters creativity and connection among the community.

F. Flicks on the Bricks: Outdoor Movie Nights

- a. Dates: First Friday of each month

- b. Location: West Street Plaza
- c. Details: A free outdoor movie screening event, providing a fun and family-friendly activity for all ages. These monthly movie nights will feature a rotating selection of popular and classic films, creating a festive, community-centered atmosphere.

G. Reno Antique Faire

- a. Dates: 3rd Sunday of each month, June-October
- b. Location: Virginia Street & Locomotion Plaza
- c. Details: A vintage and antique market, featuring local vendors showcasing a wide array of collectibles, antiques, and handmade goods. This monthly event will attract treasure hunters and collectors, while also supporting small businesses in the region.

H. Off the Rails: Summer Concert Series

- a. Dates: Last Friday of each month, June-August
- b. Location: Locomotion Plaza
- c. Details: A free outdoor concert series featuring local and regional musicians. Off the Rails aims to provide a variety of musical genres, creating an inclusive environment for diverse audiences to gather and enjoy live performances in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Next Steps:

1. **Promotions & Marketing:** We will begin to roll out marketing campaigns in the coming months, with a focus on digital platforms, local media, and community outreach to ensure maximum participation and engagement.
2. **Partnerships & Sponsorships:** We are exploring additional partnerships and sponsorships to further enhance the quality and scale of these events.
3. **Feedback & Evaluation:** Following each event, we will collect feedback from attendees, vendors, and stakeholders to assess the success of the programming and make improvements where necessary.

We are excited to kick off the 2025 Activation Pilot Programs and believe they will play a key role in shaping the future of our downtown's public life and economic vitality. Thank you for your ongoing support as we work to bring these initiatives to life.